

Remarks by
Robert F. Cekuta, Ambassador
Baku, Azerbaijan

U.S. Independence Day Reception

U.S. Embassy, Baku

July 2, 2015, 19:15

Mr. Deputy Minister, Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Because we are in Azerbaijan, let me speak first in Azerbaijani.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Embassy's Fourth of July celebration.

A special thank-you to all the firms that sponsored tonight's event.

This year's theme, "Small Town America," reflects an important reality about the United States and our success.

In the Declaration of Independence, our country's founders gave us a framework for achieving prosperity, peace, and stability. That declaration set us on a bold, uncharted course based on a set of values that enshrined individual rights and the principle that the government is accountable to its people. Over the

239 years since then, the United States has changed in ways that our founders never imagined.

Through 57 peaceful, democratic transitions of power, our system of government has allowed us to meet diverse challenges and to form partnerships around the globe to build a more peaceful, prosperous, stable world.

But our system of government is only the framework for our success, which brings me back to our theme of celebrating small town America.

In my view, America's success is based on our belief that people should engage with government institutions to find ways to meet new demands.

From the smallest towns to the largest cities, Americans participate in government through voting and public debate, questioning what our officials and leaders are doing. In effect, the American people have charted the course of our success. It is a process that continues today. And as Ambassador to Azerbaijan, let me say we welcome constructive engagement from our friends in Azerbaijan as part of that process.

As we work to build a strong, positive relationship between our two countries, I am convinced honestly assessing developments and challenges, dialogue, and discussing how we can do things better will help us both to meet the issues we face today and whatever may lie ahead.

Thank you for joining us in this conversation and in tonight's celebration.